

15. (Previously Amended) The system according to claim 8 comprising at least one tailgas processing unit downstream of said sulfur condenser.

16. (Original) The system according to claim 8 wherein said catalyst is supported on a wire gauze.

17. (Previously Amended) The system according to claim 8 wherein the catalyst is selected from the group consisting of: platinum, rhodium, iridium, nickel, palladium, iron, cobalt, rhenium, rubidium, Pd-La₂O₃, Pt/ZrO₂, Pt/Al₂O₃ and combinations thereof.

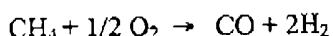
18-20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Added) The system of claim 8 comprising, in sequence:

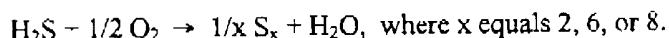
a synthesis gas reactor having a light hydrocarbon gas inlet, an O₂ inlet and an H₂S inlet,
a firetube boiler,
a sulfur condenser,
a heater, and
a tailgas cleanup unit.

22. (Previously Added) The system of claim 21 further comprising, in sequence, a cooler for receiving product gas from said tailgas cleanup unit, and a quench tower.

23. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 17 wherein said catalyst is capable of catalyzing the reactions



and



24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Added) The system of claim 15 wherein said tailgas processing unit comprises a sulfur absorbing material.

26. (Previously Added) An apparatus for producing synthesis gas and elemental sulfur, the apparatus comprising:

means for effecting both the catalytic partial oxidation of a light hydrocarbon to form CO and H₂ products and the catalytic partial oxidation of H₂S to elemental sulfur and H₂O in a single reaction zone of a short contact time reactor, whereby a stream of product containing CO, H₂, H₂O and elemental sulfur is produced;

means for maintaining the temperature of said reaction zone above the dew point of sulfur,

means for cooling said product stream below the dewpoint of sulfur;

means for recovering condensed elemental sulfur from said cooling means; and

means for recovering a stream of desulfurized synthesis gas.

27. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 26 comprising means for removing residual elemental sulfur from said desulfurized synthesis gas stream.

28. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 26 wherein said means for maintaining the temperature of said reaction zone above the dew point of sulfur comprises means for maintaining the temperature of said reaction zone above 500 degrees C.